

## Tahl Leibovitz for USATT Executive Vice President



Dear USATT Members,

Once again, it's election time, and once again, the campaign promises soar. Unfortunately, campaign promises do not help if they are not followed up. What I see are many campaign promises in this and past elections, but little follow through.

Rather than the obligatory promise to make Clubs and Junior Programs "Top Priority," I'm going to make fulfilling my campaign promises below my "Top Priority." It just so happens that Clubs and Junior programs *are* the first of my "Top Priorities"! You can hold me to that.

I would like to go over some of the most important problems that I see, and how I will fix them.

### Clubs & Junior Programs

The Incumbent Executive Vice President, Jiing Wang, has long campaigned on Club and Junior programs. He recently sent out an election flyer where he wrote as priorities, "Build and organize the USATT around new clubs and programs and state associations," and "An equipment program enabling new clubs and programs to start." I applaud this. The problem is that he has chaired the USATT Club Committee for over three years. Yet, during that entire time, the Club Committee has never met, nor has Wang or the Club Committee submitted a Club Report or Plan to the USATT Board. Neither has the Junior Committee. These are probably the two most important USATT committees, and they are 100% inactive. They exist only for show. These are serious problems that need to be fixed.

There are a number of plans submitted over the years. Larry Hodges recently showed me a [Club Development Plan](#), a [Membership Plan](#) (both linked to his name in the online USATT staff page), and a Junior Training Program he is developing. These are full of ideas with utilization plans. I welcome your ideas as well. If elected, I will ask to chair the Club Committee, and to be a member of the Junior Committee, and promise that these committees will become active in enacting plans such as these.

Some of the ideas I'm especially interested are the Club Catalyst and Creation Program, developing clubs at Bally's or LA Sports Clubs, and training coaches to develop Junior Training Programs throughout the U.S. State Associations and the USATT League are related programs that also fit in with Club and Junior Development.

### USOC Funding Cuts

- USOC recently cut off nearly all its USATT funding. **This is reality.**
- USOC wants Olympic medalists in the near future. **That's not reality.**

It's going to take years of developing the sport before we can seriously contend for Olympic medals. We have to build from within – through Clubs, Junior Programs, Leagues and State Associations.

Now let's talk reality. Do you recognize the following?

*“The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but, the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but, to have fought well.”*

That, my friends, is the **Olympic Creed**. The Olympic Games is not about winning Gold Medals, it's about taking part. It seems that our buddies at the USOC have forgotten this.

We have to show them what the sport of Table Tennis is about. We can do this by creating a strong network of Clubs, with Junior Programs and Leagues. By doing so, we will not only develop the sport in this country but, set the framework for developing Olympic medalists in the future.

### **State Associations**

This is a no-brainer. The U.S. is far too large to govern as a whole. Every country in Europe is made up of such regional associations, and those countries are much smaller than the U.S. – and far more successful in every aspect of table tennis. If elected, I promise we will start work in putting these together. Not next year or next election cycle, but now!

### **Public Relations and Marketing**

The last two years, USATT had a Marketing Director in its original budget, but the idea was dropped at the budget meeting. I would like to bring this back. We need such a person to promote and market our events. If done successfully, the position will pay for itself.

### **College Table Tennis Scholarships**

We have to find a way to keep the juniors involved in the game. We need a program to give these young players something to look forward to. I will work hard to create and sustain that program. We need college scholarships.

### **National Championships and U.S. Open Pro Tour**

These should be the premiere events for table tennis in the U.S. I believe we need to put more resources into marketing and promoting these events. This is another reason why we need a Public Relations and Marketing Director. We need to bring the ITTF Pro Tour back as soon as possible, with all the top players and exposure that it brings us.

### **Openness**

It's not just a matter of being open. Even the appearance of secrecy is a problem, except in cases involving personnel or sponsors. Anyone who knows me from the online forums knows how much I'll keep you informed of what's going on.

### **A Little About Myself**

I work for an Event Management firm which I co-founded three years ago (www.seriouscelebrations.com). This has given me great experience in running major events, which will help with my USATT work, especially in with the U.S. Nationals and Open. Some of our clients include Wolff Olins, Financial Times, The International Advertising Association, The Journal of Financial Advertising and Marketing, The Gramercy Institute, Financial Communications Society, United Cancer Charities and Team Continuum Inc. From working with these companies I've learned what it takes to market and sell a product.

I'm also a:

- USATT National Coach running an active junior program
- Former 2500 player and U.S. Olympic Qualifying Team Member
- Paralympic Gold and Bronze Medalist
- USATT Life Member
- USATT Certified Umpire
- Player for 15 years

I hope you will also support:

**For Vice President:** George Braithwaite (The Chief) and Keith Tademy

**For Treasurer:** Santos Shih

I would like to thank the following people for their help and their support, in the campaign, in getting signatures to get on the ballot, and with my campaign statement:

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If you have any questions, please email me at [tleibovitz@seriouscelebrations.com](mailto:tleibovitz@seriouscelebrations.com). If elected, I look forward to working with you over the next four years, and promise to put all my energy into fulfilling all that I have promised here. That *will* be my “Top Priority.”